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# U.S. says it is rooting out Soviet tech-spies

By Bill Gertz  
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Soviet high-tech espionage is suffering major setbacks as Western security services step up efforts to ferret out elite KGB science and technology spies, according to U.S. officials.

Intelligence sources said yesterday that a U.N. official arrested as a Soviet spy in New York Saturday was "trained in intelligence operations" and appeared to be an officer in the KGB's Line X, the intelligence service's division whose sole mission is obtaining high-technology data and hardware.

According to security experts, Line X officers are hand picked from among the most promising intelligence service recruits in the Soviet Union.

"They're generally very specialized in their field — electronics, engineering, chemistry," said Jay Tuck, author of the forthcoming book, "High-Tech Espionage."

Mr. Tuck said the KGB has stationed 300 Line X operatives around the world, operating under cover of Soviet consulates, trade missions or as U.N. employees.

When combined with GRU military intelligence and Eastern bloc technology spies, Line X can rely on the combined assets of about 20,000 intelligence agents located Western Europe, the United States and Asia, Mr. Tuck said.

"In general there is little doubt that the acquisition of embargoed technology is the No. 1 priority of Soviet bloc espionage agents," Mr. Tuck said in telephone interview.

From his research on Line X officers, Mr. Tuck said "they're very cultivated, socialize easily at cocktail parties. They

dress well, have good language skills and appear to be quite charming people."

FBI officials on Saturday arrested a scientific affairs officer — reportedly a Soviet physicist — who is employed by the Center for Science and Technology for Development at the U.N. Secretariat.

A U.N. spokesman said yesterday that Gennadiy Fedorovich Zakharov, the arrested Soviet employee, is attached to the Ukrainian mission to the United Nations.

Mr. Zakharov entered no plea at his arraignment yesterday in a New York federal court after the FBI charged him with spying for "mother Russia," as one FBI official put it. He was ordered held

for a bail hearing Wednesday.

The government will ask that Zakharov be held without bail pending trial.

Mr. Zakharov, who does not have diplomatic immunity, was arrested after he tried to buy secret documents from an FBI informant who works for a Queens, N.Y., defense contractor, the FBI said.

In the course of nearly four years of undercover work, the FBI informant supplied the Soviets with numerous unclassified technology-related documents — all of which were first carefully screened by the FBI — obtained from libraries and technology "information centers" in exchange for thousands of dollars, the FBI said.

The FBI said Mr. Zakharov had paid

the informant thousands of dollars for high-tech data relating to precision aircraft engine components, radar parts, robotics and advanced artificial-intelligence computer programs.

"The best bargains they [the Soviets] always get are on the sale of information because they really buy at a very low price," said Stephen D. Bryen, the Pentagon's top policy maker in charge of curbing technology transfers to the Soviet bloc.

More than 100 Soviet spies — many of them Line X officers — have been arrested or expelled from Western countries since 1981, according to published accounts.

In May 1983 alone, France expelled 47 alleged Soviet high-tech spies, including the Line X station chief, after a French mole in the Soviet Union revealed their identities.

Other known Line X officers were expelled from Denmark and West Germany, including a Line X officer who was exchanged in a spy swap earlier this year that brought Soviet dissident Anatoly Shcharansky to the West.

U.S. officials say arrests and expulsions of Line X officers around the world are evidence that the Reagan administration program to stem illegal technology acquisitions is working.

"If you just look at the number of Line

X officers that have been arrested or expelled in Europe, Japan and the United States, it suggests we're making progress," said one U.S. intelligence official.

For their efforts, Soviet spies have shaved years off research and development time needed to deploy military components that range from the micro-ball bearings used in the warheads of SS-18 ICBMs to the optical systems used in space-based spy satellites.

According to U.S. intelligence officials, the Soviets have used stolen Western technology in electronics and communications systems. Western advanced electronics systems obtained through espionage have been adapted by the Soviets' Military Industrial Commission — known by its Russian acronym as the VPK for a Soviet version of the U.S. "look-down-shoot-down" jet fighter radar system and electronic guidance systems used by low-flying nuclear cruise missiles.

Mr. Bryen said the KGB and the GRU have targeted all U.S. defense contractors involved in developing electronics and computer technology that may be applied to the U.S. Strategic Defense Initiative and the radar-evading Stealth aircraft.

"What they're interested in knowing is what we're up to right now," he said. "Downstream, they'll want to steal whatever they can get their hands on."

Espionage is only one component of what U.S. intelligence officials see as the Soviets' three-pronged program of technology piracy. Besides spying, the Soviets employ networks of Western businessmen who sell banned high-technology equipment. They also "vacuum" the vast amount of technology data available from open sources.